



Oregon Natural Resource Subcommittee of Ways and Means
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5009 (Support)

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Levy,

On behalf of the [Oregon Ocean Alliance](#), representing thousands of Oregonians, we express both support and concerns regarding the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) 2025-27 budget proposal (SB 5009). We urge the subcommittee to retain base funding to prevent cuts while exploring a more robust budget and revenue options. ODFW is vital to Oregon's ocean economy, ecological health, and cultural heritage, and continued investment is necessary to balance conservation with sustainable use.

Oregon's marine resources generate hundreds of millions annually through fisheries, tourism, and the seafood industry, all dependent on ODFW's management. Beyond economic benefits, the agency safeguards marine ecosystems that support biodiversity, climate resilience, and coastal livelihoods, including Indigenous communities with deep cultural ties to the ocean. With climate change, ocean acidification, and habitat loss threatening these resources, ODFW's science-based management is more crucial than ever to sustain fisheries, coastal economies, and Oregon's marine heritage.

Given budget constraints and reliance on limited revenue sources, the legislature must prioritize fiscal sustainability for ODFW to continue providing these critical services. Furthermore, the current downsizing and unprecedented reductions in force of our federal partners in research and management (NOAA, USFWS, BLM, USFS, etc) and the related funding and capacity they bring will introduce even more significant challenges for ODFW. The Oregon Ocean Alliance has no formal position but generally supports increased commercial and recreational license fees to increase the agency budget, including the saltwater endorsement, and exploring alternative revenue streams. The Alliance also supports legislative efforts like HB 2977 (1% for Wildlife) to enhance funding and ensure Oregon's ocean resources remain protected for future generations.

Oregon Ocean Alliance's key legislative priorities this session are the Eelgrass Action Bill (HB 3580) and the Rocky Habitat Stewardship Bill (HB 3587) and while neither has generated a significant fiscal impact on ODFW, it should be recognized the critical role the agency plays in these two efforts. Our collective budget concerns and priorities are outlined below:

Key ODFW Marine Program Budget Constraints & Concerns

Reject proposals to eliminate key marine program positions and funding:

- Proposed elimination of Nearshore Conservation Strategy position, which de-prioritizes agency focus on marine habitats and species amongst broader Statewide Wildlife Action Plan.
- Proposed elimination Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Coordinating Council funding, which hinders state efforts to mitigate changing ocean conditions.

Key Marine Program Policy Option Package Opportunities & Concerns

REMOVE POP 117 - Creates Wind Energy Siting Coordinator by eliminating recent investments in the Marine Reserve Program, secured through HB 4132 as a OCN priority in 2024.

SUPPORT POP 112: Reduces marine life entanglement by converting a part-time position to permanent FTE to augment the Dungeness crab project.

SUPPORT POP 108: Establishes 2 positions (1.50 FTE) in the Habitat Division to advance Natural and Working Lands initiatives, including enhancing carbon capture in coastal estuaries and seagrass meadows. Essential for implementing the state's carbon sequestration and climate resiliency goals.

SUPPORT POP 125- Essential for comprehensively implementing ODFW's Climate and Ocean Change Policy to coordinate mitigation and climate resilience efforts across ODFW's marine and wildlife programs. Establishes one 1.0 FTE position.

SUPPORT POP 111- Establishes an early response team (3 positions at 2.0 FTE) to proactively monitor Harmful Algal Blooms coast-wide, which are a significant threat to public health,wildlife, and coastal economies.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations. We urge the committee to pass a robust budget for the agency.

Respectfully,

Annie Merrill and Joe Liebezeit, Co-Chairs, Oregon Ocean Alliance

Oregon Ocean Alliance Members: [Who We Are](#)

Bird Alliance of Oregon
Coast Range Association
Elakha Alliance
Environment Oregon
Oceana

Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
Seven Capes Bird Alliance
Surfrider Foundation
The Nature Conservancy